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Becker, J.W.; de Lange, W.A.M.

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The Dutch Case

J.W. Becker and W. de Lange

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1. General introduction

In May, 1993, *Le monde diplomatique* devoted a special issue to the limits of the world economy, depicting the consequences of new technologies for the character of society. Gorz, one of the writers, contended in his article that such a small part of the working-age population is now represented in the *civilisation du travail* that the social order is disintegrating at a high pace. For Gorz it is clear that our society is at a turning point: the work society has come to an end, and reorientation is urgently needed. Is that now really the case?

In many of the economically highly developed societies, the claim that paid work makes on the lives of individuals indeed appears to have eased considerably. More people are involved in schooling. Contractual working time is decreasing. Unemployment is still much higher than in the early seventies, and a large part of it is long-term. Early retirement has caused the average pensioning age to sink by several years. The numbers of those declared disabled or medically unfit for work are rising. But do such indications also mean we can say goodbye to the work society?

In this paper we shall attempt via two different routes to gain insight into whether the work society is really in decline or has already reached its end. First we shall look at some recent statistics relating to labour force participation, as these can tell us a good deal about the place work in a quantitative sense now occupies in society. We shall then try to discover to what extent individuals still remain oriented to paid employment: their work orientation.

2. Some structural trends

2.1 Definition of terms

Before considering these issues we must first define what we mean by work, labour and work society. A work society is one in which the social order is founded primarily on participation in paid work. We refer here to both labour and work in the narrow sense of those words: an activity one performs against payment from someone else (Gorz as cited in Mok, 1990, 21).

This restriction to paid work carries certain complications with it. To what extent does the existence of an informal economy enhance or weaken the work-based nature of society? Shouldn't we take the educational system into account, too, especially its vocationally oriented character? How important is social prestige here? If work no longer determines status by itself, does that mean the work society is done with?

No unequivocal, objective answer can be given to such questions. Our society is increasingly diversified and unpredictable, and that makes it all the more difficult to assign one label to it. It has become a society with many faces, many labels. Even so, it should still be possible to assess the extent to which the Netherlands can be characterized as a work society. There are forces which stimulate labour force participation and others which impede it. We shall describe these forces and try to determine to what degree such trends are reflected in the work orientation of the population.

2.2 Centrifugal and centripetal forces

Some trends within the Dutch work order suggest that work is losing its dominant position in society. We refer to these here as centrifugal forces. Other developments which run counter to them will be called centripetal forces.

In this section we focus on a number of developments in the field of work and try to assess which of these two types of forces is more prevalent. We start by describing how work is evolving in a quantitative sense. If centrifugal forces are dominant, this should surely be reflected in decreased work activity among the working-age population and/or in shorter working hours for the employed. We shall also address such issues as the value people ascribe to work, what they expect and desire from it, and what place work occupies in relation to other

aspects of their lives.

Potential working population

Formally speaking, the working-age population makes up nearly 70% of the Dutch population. In this respect there is little observable difference between the Netherlands and other EU countries or nations as the United States and Japan (Eurostat, 1992; OECD, 1992b).

As a percentage of the total population, the working-age population will shrink steadily within the next thirty years, though it will still be growing in absolute numbers. This process of 'dejuvenation' will not be felt in the Netherlands until after the turn of the century: the number of 0- to 14- year-olds will increase slightly until 2000, then decline in both relative and absolute terms. The dejuvenation process has already set in in some countries, among them Germany (Eurostat, 1992). As for the process of ageing, the Netherlands is no exception to the general pattern in Western Europe. The number of people over 65 is growing both relatively and absolutely.

Participation

Not all members of the working-age population actually work. Some are involved in education, and some are not able to work due to illness or disability. Still others have retired early, are unemployed, or are doing unpaid domestic work. Even so, the majority of the working-age population are in paid employment.

In an international context the Netherlands still occupies an exceptional position. Labour force participation is markedly lower than in neighbouring countries, but the gap is closing fast. The participation rate has increased substantially since 1985, especially because large numbers of women are entering employment. This trend is expected to continue in the years to come.

The number of persons in paid employment in the Netherlands has been continually rising since 1970. Until the mid-1980s the same trend was present, and to a greater degree, in Japan, Sweden and especially the United States. West Germany and the United Kingdom, by contrast, showed little or no increase until recent years, when in the numbers of employed persons have again been rising (OECD, 1992a, 1992b).

Despite the steady increase in the Netherlands, still less than half the total population is now engaged in paid work. Employed persons made up about 40% of the population in 1985, and this was 6% more in 1990. In many modern work societies, including the United States, Japan and Sweden, employed persons number somewhat more than half of the total population.

Unemployment

One form of non-participation is unemployment. Unemployment in the Netherlands climbed from 1% in the early 1970s to over 10% during the 1980s, then declined somewhat in the second half of that decade. The same pattern could be seen in most other industrialized countries, except Japan and to some extent Sweden (OECD, 1992b). It is obvious that the growth in job opportunities since 1970 has been insufficient in most nations to force unemployment back to the low levels of twenty years ago.

Disability

Another type of non-participation is medical disability. It has risen sharply since the early eighties, measured either in persons or in benefit years. It has been pointed out that a large part of this increase can be blamed on improper use of the Disability Insurance Act and the General Disability Act (WAO/AAW); a substantial number of hidden unemployed are said to be contained in these schemes (Aarts & De Jong, 1990). The unemployment figures should therefore be a good deal higher than they are now, and the disability figures much lower.

Part-time work

The increase in the number of employed persons and the growth of labour force participation run parallel with the increase in the numbers of people between 15 and 65 years old who are working part-time. In the Netherlands, for example, 33% of all employed people in 1991 had part-time jobs, compared to only 21% eight years earlier. Virtually all Western European countries have experienced an increase in part-time employment, though the level and speed of it were usually lower than in the Netherlands (Eurostat, 1989, 1993).

To illustrate: 7% of the employed males in the Netherlands and 49% of their female colleagues had part-time jobs in 1983. By 1991 these percentages had risen to 16% and 60%, amounting to one third of all employed persons. While women still predominate among the part-timers, some of the increase can be attributed to men, whose number has more than doubled. This trend

is likewise present in many other countries, though it is nowhere so rapid as in the Netherlands.

Working hours

The decrease in the average number of hours worked yearly is due not only to part-time employment, but to reductions in working time as well. In most countries the number of hours worked has gradually declined on a weekly as well as a yearly basis. The decline in the number of hours worked yearly is even greater if we include not just employees with jobs of more than 20 hours a week, but all employees. In that case the decrease in the Netherlands amounts to 250 hours per year on average (OECD, 1988). A significant part of this can be attributed, of course, to part-time work.

Time allocation

The outcome of all these trends is revealed in the time budgets of various types of people. These afford us insights into the number of hours Dutch people are spending in paid employment. Table 1 shows the time budgets of several population categories from 1975 to 1990 for a number of different activities, including paid work.

Table 1 Time spent by various categories of the Dutch population aged 12 and over on daily activities during a single week in October, 1975, 1980, 1985 and 1990 (in hours per week)

	education and self development				work				household/family duties			
	1975	1980	1985	1990	1975	1980	1985	1990	1975	1980	1985	1990
entire sample	6.7	7.3	7.2	6.9	14.8	14.0	14.1	16.6	19.1	19.5	19.4	18.5
men	7.6	8.1	7.9	7.1	23.7	22.1	21.6	24.5	8.6	9.3	10.3	10.4
women	5.9	6.5	6.6	6.7	6.1	6.1	6.8	8.8	29.5	29.5	28.3	26.5
12-19 years	28.3	30.9	33.6	35.2	8.2	5.5	4.0	6.3	6.0	7.1	5.5	5.5
20-34 years	3.5	5.0	5.2	5.8	23.2	22.0	21.8	24.2	21.2	20.3	20.0	17.9
35-49 years	1.3	1.6	1.3	1.9	18.9	19.8	21.1	23.4	22.4	23.7	23.6	22.7
50-64 years	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.8	15.1	12.6	11.9	11.8	21.9	21.5	22.0	20.0
>65 and over	0.1	0.5	0.6	0.5	1.3	0.5	0.8	0.7	24.3	24.1	22.9	22.4
pupils, students	35.1	34.4	34.9	35.3	3.2	2.4	2.4	4.3	6.0	6.6	6.1	6.5
working men[b]	1.2	1.5	1.3	1.6	42.7	41.7	42.2	43.4	6.3	7.2	8.2	8.4
working women[b]	1.8	2.1	1.5	2.3	37.5	35.6	35.9	35.1	13.5	16.1	17.1	16.4
housewives	0.8	1.1	0.7	1.2	1.2	1.0	0.5	0.9	37.4	37.6	37.2	35.7
unemployed and disabled	0.9	1.3	1.6	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.9	19.1	19.3	20.1
retired men	0.2	0.8	0.9	0.7	2.0	1.0	1.1	0.9	16.7	13.9	16.0	16.9
primary education[c]	0.7	0.5	0.4	0.8	11.3	9.4	8.9	5.4	23.8	24.3	25.0	23.7
junior secondary[c]	0.8	1.1	0.7	0.7	19.0	17.9	15.9	16.6	22.6	23.5	24.2	23.2
senior secondary[c]	1.9	3.1	1.6	2.1	19.8	22.7	21.5	23.3	17.5	18.0	19.6	19.1
tertiary, university[c]	1.0	2.3	1.8	2.1	24.2	22.8	25.6	25.3	17.4	16.7	17.2	16.7

[a] The various categories of activities include travel.

[b] Persons who performed more than 20 hours paid work in the survey week.

[c] Relates to persons aged 18 and over. Those still in education have been classified according to the highest level of education attained.

Source: SCP (TBO'75, '80, '85, '90) weighted results

Table 1 (continued) Time spent by various categories of the Dutch population aged 12 and over on daily activities during a single week in October, 1975, 1980, 1985 and 1990 (in hours per week)

	sleeping, eating, personal care				leisure activities				number of respondents			
	1975	1980	1985	1990	1975	1980	1985	1990	1975	1980	1985	1990
entire sample	76.3	76.8	75.3	75.5	47.9	46.9	49.0	47.2	1,309	2,730	3,262	3,158
men	75.6	76.5	74.8	74.6	49.6	48.7	50.5	48.2	648	1,349	1,607	1,564
women	77.0	77.2	75.7	76.4	46.2	45.2	47.6	46.2	661	1,381	1,655	1,594
12-19 years	78.1	78.7	78.8	77.9	44.2	41.5	42.6	39.6	250	468	509	395
20-34 years	72.7	73.9	73.1	74.0	44.9	43.8	45.1	43.1	357	804	933	983
35-49 years	75.2	75.2	73.1	72.9	46.9	44.8	46.3	44.3	282	591	781	819
50-64 years	77.2	78.0	76.0	75.9	50.5	51.8	54.5	55.3	233	484	565	555
>65 and over	81.5	81.9	78.5	81.3	57.0	57.4	61.6	59.2	187	383	475	406
pupils, students	78.0	77.9	77.7	76.9	42.6	42.2	43.0	41.0	220	481	576	486
working men[b]	72.0	73.0	71.5	71.4	43.5	42.2	42.5	41.1	338	676	783	827
working women[b]	75.1	74.5	72.8	73.1	37.2	37.4	38.5	38.5	74	168	237	309
housewives	77.0	77.4	75.4	77.0	48.2	47.8	51.5	49.8	393	749	828	686
unemployed and disabled	80.4	79.3	77.9	77.8	68.3	64.7	66.1	63.7	49	108	211	175
retired men	81.8	83.3	79.2	80.6	63.3	65.2	67.3	64.6	77	167	215	234
primary education[c]	78.5	79.9	76.7	80.8	50.0	50.8	54.5	54.4	351	578	691	331
junior secondary[c]	74.5	75.9	74.7	75.8	48.1	46.4	49.9	48.6	459	1,075	987	1,047
senior secondary[c]	75.3	73.2	73.6	73.8	50.8	48.1	48.9	46.5	134	198	568	733
tertiary, university[c]	74.7	73.5	73.3	72.2	48.1	49.1	46.8	48.1	100	222	362	470

[a] The various categories of activities include travel.

[b] Persons who performed more than 20 hours paid work in the survey week.

[c] Relates to persons aged 18 and over. Those still in education have been classified according to the highest level of education attained.

Source: SCP (TBO'75, '80, '85, '90) weighted results

The table, which is based on the Time-Budget Survey of the Social and Cultural Planning Office, indicates considerable shifts in the spending of time between 1975 and 1990. For the entire Dutch population 12 years and older, an increase in the average number of hours worked is evident. As a consequence of higher labour force participation by women, the increase is greater for them than for men, though both groups show an increase.

The SCP study shows further that from 1975 to 1990 the amount of time spent working substantially increased in the age group 35 to 49 years and among the better educated, while declining among the rest of the population. In the youngest (12-19 years) and oldest (50 years and older) age groups a sharp drop occurred in the time spent on paid work. In the group between 35 and 49 years, on the other hand, there was a relative increase of no less than 24%. Another sharp divide has appeared between different educational categories. People with less education (up to lower vocational or lower general level) spent considerably less time working in 1990 than in 1975, whereas the better educated (upper vocational or upper general level onwards) worked much more.

This pattern reflects a more general trend: all one's various obligations have come to demand more time (SCP 1992). Especially because different tasks coincide, work tends to amass within a limited period of life. The time needed for work, study and domestic chores put together has increased virtually across the board between 1975 and 1990, resulting in a decrease in the net amount of free time. Only a few population categories have been able to escape this: persons above 50 and those with little education have acquired more free time. An unmistakable *segmentation* of society has emerged.

The SCP observes that a large group of citizens have been banished from employment just when they are well able to concentrate on work. 'With the advent of post-industrial society, leisure time has become an ageing commodity, and likewise one which increasingly belongs to the underprivileged. ... A new social division has emerged: people with no time and people with loads of time, a calendared class and an uncalendared class. People now derive status from participation and from many-sided adventures. A fully booked calendar serves as a means of distinction.' (Batenburg et al. 1992, 20)

2.3 Intermediate conclusions

Do the developments summarized in Section 2.2 now permit a straightforward answer to the question of whether the Dutch work society is in decline, or has come to an end?

In this study we view the increase in the rate of labour force participation as one of the most significant developments. The participation rate is, roughly defined, the number of employed persons plus unemployed persons divided by the working-age population. In evaluating this quotient we must therefore take the rate of unemployment into account. Despite the countervailing influence of the growing disability rate, the participation rate has risen strongly in the past fifteen to twenty years, from 58,4% in 1971 to 61,5% in 1993. Even after we deduct the unemployment figures, the number of persons working is still considerably higher than it was. This is mainly because more and more women are entering paid employment. In view of the ongoing emancipation of women, individualization and pursuit of self-fulfilment, this tendency is expected to continue (Ester et al. 1993). In that case a participation rate similar to that in the United Kingdom (78%) or even Sweden (85%) does not seem unlikely. In the first half of this century, not being employed was a form of women's emancipation. Not having to work, and hence being able to devote oneself to one's family, was no longer a privilege of the well-to-do. But today the women's movement and the smaller size of families have given women the chance to secure their own income from work on an equal footing with men. The social security and tax systems also contribute to the rising participation rate, as they tend to expect people to be relatively self-reliant in society.

If predictions prove correct that the working-age population will have shrunk only slightly by 2020 and that the rate of participation will continue to grow rather rapidly, then on balance an increasing number of people will be engaged in paid work during the next thirty years. In other words, centripetal forces will predominate.

Government policies may contribute further to this development. It is commonly acknowledged that current levels of unemployment and disability are far too high. Government policy is strongly geared towards reducing them, and as this is underwritten by employers and trade unions alike, such policies enjoy broad support in society. From this perspective, then, there is also no evidence that the end of the work society is in sight.

In the process of segmentation we noted in Table 1, both centrifugal and centripetal forces can be identified. On the one hand, entry into employment at a later age after a longer period of education means fewer working years for individuals. On the other hand, this pursuit of education reflects the importance being attached to work: people are going to greater lengths to ensure themselves of employment. Once admitted to the 'guild', they seem willing to continue their exertions, even at the expense of their free time. A longer spell of education could, of course, just as well result from centrifugal considerations, with young people staying at college because they believe they cannot find a job, or because they wish to enjoy their freedom as long as possible.

The dramatic fall in working time for the group over 50 must be seen principally as a centrifugal development. The great 'burnout' within this age category and the 'dumping' of large groups of employees into early retirement schemes during economic recessions point to a process of selection. The work society has its own 'survival of the fittest'.

3. Work orientation

3.1 Introduction

Have the developments we just described in the area of labour force participation given rise to any different notions about work in general? At a cultural level, postmaterialism would appear to boast a growing number of adherents (Inglehart 1990). It would stand to reason that this trend, with its emphasis on democratization, participation and self-realization and its distaste for traditional values, has not left work orientation undisturbed. It is still unclear, however, just what changes in work orientation we might expect. Because of the privileges it carries, work remains attractive. Development of work orientation in a distinctly negative direction is therefore unlikely. To an extent, increasing postmaterialism could lead to contradictory outcomes. Greater support for its values will probably not lead to a negative valuation of work, but work orientation is sure to become less traditional. The traditional nature of work orientation will also be weakened by the early retirement of older employees and the arrival of large numbers of part-timers.

The material for this part of our paper has been derived from two databases -- that of the 1989

International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), and one we compiled from surveys from different years in the SCP series *Cultural Changes in the Netherlands (CV).* The SCP investigates cultural changes in yearly surveys in which questions are repeated verbatim to facilitate the measuring of such changes. The surveys are done orally. In some years, an ISSP questionnaire is also left behind with the respondent to be completed and returned. The same drop-off questionnaire is administered to the public in a large number of other countries. Each time the questions are on a different topic. In 1989 work orientation was studied. More detailed information on ISSP in general can be found in Becker et al. (1990).

3.2 International comparison

From the countries where the ISSP study was held in 1989, we have made a selection for the purposes of this paper. The Netherlands was compared with West Germany, Austria, Great Britain and Norway. The data from these Western European nations was supplemented with data from the United States. Several of the opinions polled were taken to correspond to key elements of work orientation:

- Whether one would like to spend more, less or the same amount of time on paid work, leisure activities, relaxation and resting up. These were used as indicators of the amount of pressure one was experiencing from work.[1]
- Whether one would still want a job even if one did not need the money, and whether work was one's most important activity or just a way of earning money. These were taken as indicators of work ethic, that is, as evidence of a traditional attitude by which work is seen as a value in itself, regardless of the money involved.
- Three statements were linked to performance mentality: I only work as hard as strictly necessary; I work hard, but not at the expense of my private life; I make it a point to do my work as well as possible, even if that is sometimes at the expense of my private life.
- Extrinsic notions of work were presumed to be indicated by the importance attached to high income and good chances of promotion.
- The importance attached to interesting and self-reliant work was taken as evidence for intrinsic work orientation.
- A social inclination in one's work orientation was inferred from a reported special interest in jobs which involve helping others.

The answers of respondents who considered themselves to be working full-time are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2 Some aspects of work orientation in six countries, 1989 (percentages for full-time workers, 16-65 years of age)

	NL	G	A	GB	N	USA	T
Work pressure							
a) want to spend less time on paid work	39	44	24	60	31	41	38
b) want to spend more time on leisure activities	75	70	58	81	65	79	70
c) want more time to rest up	34	70	55	77	34	74	57
Work ethic							
e) disagree with: working is just a way to get money	65	49	64	59	67	65	62
f) I would want a job even if I didn't need the money	54	59	72	63	76	68	67
g) agree with: working is the most important thing one can do	33	35	44	32	61	35	42
Performance mentality							
h) I work no harder than strictly necessary	7	16	10	5	12	7	10
i) I work hard, but not at the expense of my private life	62	49	43	35	44	30	43
j) I do my work as well as possible, even if that is at the expense of my private life	30	34	46	60	44	64	47
Extrinsic orientation							
k) consider a high income very important in a job	12	27	36	18	12	23	22
l) consider good promotion opportunities very important in a job	9	20	25	9	4	5	19
Intrinsic orientation							
m) consider interesting work very important	38	53	65	48	51	45	51
n) consider large measure of self-reliance in work very important	36	48	65	21	21	30	39
Social orientation							
o) consider work in which one can help others very important	20	17	35	17	13	24	21

NL = Netherlands GB = Great Britain T = Total of six countries

G = West Germany N = Norway

A = Austria USA = United States

Source: SCP/ISSP '89

Dutch full-time workers reported experiencing low work pressure compared with people in other countries. They occupied an intermediate position with regard to satisfaction with their working hours and leisure time. A low percentage expressed the need to spend more time resting.

This outcome may have been influenced by selective composition of the Dutch labour force resulting from the disability legislation. The number of workers classified as medically disabled is high in the Netherlands; in 1994 it was about 800,000, compared to a labour force of over six million. About half have been declared unfit on psychological grounds, which could be related to work pressure. In other words, specifically those persons who were unable to cope with the pressure of work could have already been removed from the labour force. However, the likelihood of being declared unfit for work has been found to be about the same in the Netherlands as in other countries (SCP, 1992: 141). Hence, one could also conclude that Dutch employees are reasonably able to hold their own in work situations.

The work ethic in the Netherlands does not appear exceptionally traditional. A relatively low percentage of full-time workers agreed that work is one's most important activity or that one would still want a job even if the income was not needed. This finding seems consistent with the pronounced tendency of the Dutch to protect their private lives against the demands of work, as revealed in the pertinent opinion items (Table 2-i,j).

Full-time workers in the various countries do not distinguish themselves by attaching exclusive importance to either extrinsic or intrinsic aspects of work. Either they valued all aspects of work, or they were less likely to value them. Dutch full-timers placed relatively low demands on work. Interest in high income, good promotion chances and interesting work were also lower than the average in the six countries. Interest in self-reliant work and in work that involves helping others was about average.

As a whole, work orientation in the Netherlands appeared rather relaxed when considered internationally, and it did not seem particularly traditional. Dutch people did not perceive work as a heavy burden, nor did they appear to place heavy demands upon it. They wished to perform their tasks as well as possible, but not at the expense of their private lives.

As for perceived workload, the Dutch situation formed a contrast with that in Britain and the United States, where the workload appeared quite heavy. A performance mentality seemed most highly developed in those English-speaking countries. The work ethic was found to be the most traditional in Norway and Austria. Austrians also made high demands on work, but the Norwegians did not.

In most respects, the Dutch work orientation bore a fairly strong resemblance to that in West Germany, though prevailing imagery of the Germans as industrious and hard-working might have suggested the contrary. Significant differences appeared only with regard to demands placed on work.

Working women in the Netherlands constitute an important new category in the labour market. Are they different from working women in the other countries? Gender differences were found to have little bearing on work orientation internationally. Dutch working women appeared to attach less importance than working women in other countries to a high income. In Norway, men placed less weight on promotion chances than did other men. No other significant gender differences were found.[2]

3.3 Postmaterialism and work orientation in the Netherlands

Does postmaterialism bear any relation to the Dutch work orientation? That is a hard question to answer with the available data. No questions on postmaterialism were included in the ISSP survey of 1989. In the Cultural Changes in the Netherlands series they were introduced only in the most recent surveys in 1992 and 1993, in a battery of questions drawn up by Inglehart. With a little goodwill, however, we can still throw some light on the import of postmaterialism by choosing an alternative operationalization of it.

The body of thought of the 1960s lies at the heart of postmaterialism. Postmaterialists are devoted to a democratic society which provides opportunities for participation and self-realization. The 1989 Cultural Changes study contained scales which measured support for democratic liberties and participation. Democratic liberties include freedom of expression and demonstration. Democratic participation includes the involvement of employees, citizens, students and secondary school pupils in the affairs that concern them. We can let these two attitude scales stand proxy for postmaterialism. This assumption finds support in the significant

correlations we obtained between each of these scales and the 12-item Inglehart battery when we tested them using the 1993 Cultural Changes data. Postmaterialism correlated with support for democratic liberties and with support for participation at a one percent significance level. The correlation coefficients were 0.20 and 0.16 respectively.

By linking the 1989 Cultural Changes data with those of the ISSP from the same year, we constructed one set of data encompassing both the democratic liberties and participation scales and the opinions relating to work orientation. Table 3 shows some of the correlation coefficients we arrived at, using all data from Dutch respondents we previously used for the international comparison. Non-significant findings are bracketed. The correlations apply to all respondents who were working full-time. We chose to define full-timers as those working more than 15 hours a week, as this was the ISSP-definition.

Table 3 Correlations of views on democratic liberties and democratic participation with various notions about work, 1989, among full-time workers (> 15 hours per week) 16-65 years of age

	democratic liberties (-> pro liberties)	democratic participation (-> pro participation)
time for paid work (-> less)	0.11	(-0.08)
time for leisure activities (-> more)	(0.08)	(0.05)
time for resting up (-> more)	(-0.02)	(0.05)
work is just a way to earn money (-> disagree)	0.08	(-0.06)
want a job, even if money is not needed (-> disagree)	(0.01)	(-0.03)
working is the most important thing one can do (-> disagree)	0.19	0.11
work no harder than strictly necessary (-> agree)	(-0.06)	(<0.05)
work hard, but not at expense of private life (-> agree)	(-0.06)	(0.05)
work as well as possible, even if at expense of private life (-> agree)	(0.00)	-0.09
high income (-> unimportant)	(-0.03)	(0.02)
good promotion opportunities (-> unimportant)	(0.07)	(0.01)
interesting work (-> unimportant)	-0.08	(-0.08)
self-reliant work (-> unimportant)	(-0.02)	(-0.07)
helping people (-> unimportant)	0.11	(-0.07)

Source: SCP (ISSP '89, CV '89)

The relationships which emerge between postmaterialism and the various elements of work orientation are generally weak. It is worth noting that postmaterialists tend rather strongly to expect more from life than just working. At any rate they disagree more often than others with the assertion that work is the most important thing one can do. A related indication, though weaker (only the democratic liberties result was significant), was their desire to spend less time in paid work. Postmaterialists were also more inclined to view work as more than just a way to earn money, and to place more value on interesting work. Both these results would seem to fit in with the importance of self-fulfilment which is characteristic of postmaterialism. Socially meaningful work doesn't seem to fit into the materialism-post materialism distinction. Those infavour of democratic freedoms placed *less* emphasis on helping others in the course of their work.

On the whole, however, the relationship between postmaterialism and work orientation appears weak. Hence, the spread of postmaterialism in the Netherlands most probably has had no fundamental impact on work orientation. Of course, such influence was not entirely absent. Postmaterialism may have furthered the notion that there is more to life than work, and perhaps also the expectation that work should be interesting. It could, therefore, still be linked to a certain relaxation of the work ethic and to a greater concern for the content of work.

3.4 The Dutch figures in a time perspective

We have characterized the Dutch work orientation as relaxed in the present-day international context. To what extent is such a label justified by the data collected over the years, and have changes in the work orientation occurred? The SCP Cultural Changes project includes a limited number of questions on aspects of work orientation. Because this topic has not been systematically addressed in survey questions, and because the time series have not always been kept up-to-date, we can derive no more than a few indications from the SCP project.

The following time series are at the researcher's disposal:

- Four opinion scales can be said to be related to work ethic: whether one enjoys going back to work after a free weekend or is sorry the weekend is over (1981-93); whether one would go on working after winning a million guilders in the lottery; and whether one would, if necessary, work an hour overtime without pay (1975-93).
- The opinions on whether one feels work or free time is more important (1975-86).

- Four items on the current rights of every citizen, including the right to self-fulfilling work.
- Two opinion items on the extent to which one objects to a married woman working outside the home (1975-93); and one question asked to non-working women about their desire to work outside the home (1981-93).

The views of persons working full-time are summarized in Tables 4 to 6. Percentages are reported for all respondents as well as for several special categories, including women working full-time.

The figures in Table 4 suggest that orientation to work remained constant or strengthened slightly over the years. Full-time workers in 1993 were somewhat more likely to say they enjoyed going back to work after the weekend than those in 1981 (Table 4-a), but the percentage that didn't mind the weekend being over stayed the same (Table 4-b). Between 1987 and 1993 the desire to go on working after winning the lottery gained strength. The willingness to work an hour overtime unpaid did not change (Table 4-c,d).

Heads of businesses were the most attached to work. Attitudes of white and blue collar workers differed little. Women who worked full-time strengthened their orientation to paid employment the most. In 1981 it was comparable to that of other full-time workers, but in 1993 it was stronger (Table 4-a,b,c).

Views on work did not evolve decidedly towards a choice between free time and paid work (Table 5). There was evidence that full-time workers were pursuing their main interests more during off-hours, but at the same time they became less likely to see leisure time as more important than work (Table 5-a,b). Differentiating the changes produced no conclusions.

In 1975, Dutch people believed it was everyone's right to have work that provided opportunities for self-fulfilment, to have a comfortable home, and to obtain as much education as they wished (Table 6-b,c,d). It is conceivable that adverse economic conditions with high unemployment could lead people to forgo such rights, especially the right to self-fulfilment in work. However, only the right to maintain a stable income appears sensitive to economic decline (Table 5-a). As we see in Table 9, opinions on this last issue react strongly to year-to-year fluctuations in prosperity. This seems understandable, for such developments receive much publicity. Opinions

on the other issues do not seem to alter under influence of economic ups and downs. Such rights are evidently considered inalienable. Opinions on self-fulfilling work did not vary according to the gender or occupation of the full-time working respondents.

Employment for women outside the home was increasingly considered 'not objectionable' or even recommendable (Table 7-a). The answers are reported first for all respondents, whether working or not. The attitude change among women on the whole was comparable to that of all respondents. But the attitudes of women who themselves were working full-time altered rather strongly. A majority of them already agreed in 1975 that women could be employed outside the home, but in 1993 this opinion was virtually universal among them.

A positive attitude towards working outside the home is associated with the generation to which respondents, male or female, belong. The younger the generation, the more positive the attitude. In 1993, support for women's employment among the youngest generation, born after 1960, was practically universal. But there was a time effect, too: support grew in all generations over time. If working outside the home requires that children be put in a crèche, opinions become more cautious (Table 7-b), but changes in these opinions follow the same course as those on the general item.

The desire to take on employment outside the home is entertained by just under half of the housewives (Table 8). It neither gained nor lost strength between 1981 and 1993. It is predominantly the post-war generation among the housewives that seems keen on the idea of finding employment. Those women, then, form a major pool of recruitment for employers.

4. Conclusion

Labour force participation in the Netherlands has traditionally been low. Since the early 1970s unemployment has grown, and much of it is long-term. A large part is also structural, not arising from cyclical influences but enduring in nature. Large numbers of workers have been declared medically unfit to work, and contractual working time has decreased. We consider these to be centrifugal developments: they erode the importance of paid work in Dutch society.

Nonetheless, there are also centripetal trends. Participation of married women in employment has grown, especially in part-time work. The time budgeting of the Dutch gives reason to assume that the centripetal forces will predominate in the long run. The average time spent by Dutch people on paid work indeed increased from 1975 to 1990. On the other hand, a split emerged with regard to the allocation of time, with working time becoming concentrated in the 35- to 49-year age group. There is also reason to believe that work puts strain on married women who are trying to combine paid employment with household tasks. A calendared class now stands opposite an uncalendared group.

We might expect centripetal forces to intensify the orientation towards work, and centrifugal forces to have the opposite effect. So just how work-oriented are the Dutch? In an international context, the Dutch work orientation seems relaxed. Postmaterialist ideas may have had some influence on this attitude. At first glance, little has changed in the course of the past two decades as far as work orientation goes. This could mean we are dealing with a set of norms so strong that structural developments as yet have had little effect on them. However, another possibility is that orientational changes within the calendared class neutralize other changes occurring in the uncalendared class. One indication for this can be drawn from the work orientation of working women. Not only did their numbers increase, but they became more strongly work-oriented as well.

All things considered, the trends in labour force participation and the expulsion of labour in the Netherlands appear to have had little influence on attitudes towards work, except in those groups of people, such as married women, who are new to paid work and for whom participation in work is often a conscious choice.

In concluding we should like to make one final observation. Even though no leisure society can be anticipated within the foreseeable future, the work society itself provides plenty of food for thought and debate. This stems in large part from the fields of tension this society generates. Work is assigned great importance, and is considered more or less obligatory for anyone who is able, but too few jobs are available. Meanwhile, a curious situation prevails. Huge amounts of work remain undone or receive no more than marginal attention. The health care system furnishes graphic examples of such neglect. Evidently we are not capable of organizing our society in a way that meets these primary needs for care, work and income. The most

formidable problem faced by the work society, then, appears to be one of allocation: a just distribution of work, leisure and income. At the root of this fundamental allocation problem lies the high level of prosperity that the work society has brought forth. Younger generations are accustomed to, and indulged by, a relatively high, stable living standard, and on average they have a high level of education. Consequently, the demands they make on the content, terms and conditions of work are high. It seems as though Western society has become caught in a net of prosperity that there is no way out of. In this paper we have seen that replacing the work society by a society of leisure is still an illusion. There are dangers ahead, however, that could undermine the work society. Much imagination will be needed to withstand them.

Table 4 Some indicators of work orientation for full-time workers (>15 hours per week), full-time working women and occupational level, 1981-1993 (percentages)

	1981	1987	1993
a enjoy going back to work after the weekend			
- all	62	64	69
- women	63	67	75
- blue collar	62	61	69
- white collar	59	65	69
- heads of businesses	78	79	80
b don't mind when weekend is over			
- all	46	47	48
- women	45	49	52
- blue collar	44	39	45
- white collar	44	47	48
- heads of businesses	61	70	59
c want to go on working after winning a million			
- all		82	87
- women		80	84
- blue collar		79	84
- white collar		83	87
- heads of businesses		89	94
d would work extra hour unpaid			
- all		73	73
- women		70	76
- blue collar		50	53
- white collar		78	76
- heads of businesses		97	90

Source: SCP (CV '81, '87, '93)

Table 5 Views on leisure time and work among full-time workers (>15 hours per week) 1979-1986 (percentages, 16-74 years of age)

	1979	1983	1986
most important interests lie:			
- more in leisure time than in work	27	27	34
- equally in both	53	50	46
- more in work than in leisure time	20	24	21
most satisfaction comes from:			
- leisure time	20	19	21
- equally from both	61	58	58
- work	20	22	21
the most important thing in life is:			
- leisure time	60	57	50
- both equally important	19	24	27
- work	21	19	23

Source: SCP (CV '79, '83, '86)

Table 6 Views on the current rights of every citizen, among full-time workers (>15 hours per week) 1979-1986 (percentages, 16-74 years of age)

	1975	1979	1985
a) maintain at least the same income	77	76	70
b) have a comfortable home	96	96	94
c) get as much education as wanted	93	91	90
d) have work which gives self-fulfilment	96	95	91

Source: SCP (CV '75, '79, '85)

Table 7 Opinions on married women working outside the home, by gender, occupational status and generation, 1975-1993 (percentages, 16 years and older)

	1975	1980	1985	1991	1993
a) consider it unobjectionable or recommendable for married woman with schoolgoing children to work outside the home					
all respondents	57	64	69	78	78
all women	59	69	71	81	79
women working more than 15 hours a week	74	86	86	92	95
housewives	54	61	63	73	67
all respondents:					
born prior to 1930	39	48	49	58	53
born 1930-1944	64	63	67	63	67
born 1945-1959	74	77	78	82	82
born 1960 and after	.	72	80	92	92
b) consider it unobjectionable or recommendable for married woman to work outside the home, even if children must go to crèche					
all respondents	36	36	46	58	57
all women	35	33	47	60	59
women working more than 15 hours a week	37	38	50	61	62
housewives	34	29	41	53	48
all respondents:					
born prior to 1930	31	34	41	51	52
born 1930-44	38	33	44	54	53
born 1945-59	38	39	51	57	54
born 1960 and after	.	36	44	64	64

Source: SCP (CV '75, '80, '85, '91, '93)

Table 8 Desire to work outside the home among all not-employed women, housewives and non-employed women by generation (percentages, 16 years and older)

	1981	1985	1991	1993
stand favourably towards working outside home				
all non-employed women	43	42	46	47
housewives	42	42	44	45
born before 1930	17	21	18	22
born 1930-44	47	44	37	32
born 1945 and after	89	94	85	92

Source: SCP (CV '81, '85, '91, '93)

Table 9 Actual prosperity and ideas about prosperity in the Netherlands, 1975-1993 (respectively in index numbers, percentage changes and percentages)

	1975	1981	1985	1991	1992	1993
national income 1975 = 100 a)	100	107	111	125	126	.
change relative to previous year	-2.3	-1.8	2.4	1.0	0.8	.
opinions on right to maintain at least the same income	78	58	68	70	74	67

a) national income based on market prices (volume data)

Source: CBS, SCV (CV '75, '81, '85, '91, '92, '93)

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Notes

1 We are concerned here with pressure from work as perceived by the respondents. The figures are therefore no indication of actual work pressures.

2 These results are based on an analysis of variance with the opinions as dependent variables and country and gender as independent ones.

Work and Organization Research Centre
Warandelaan 2, P.O. Box 90153, 5000 LE Tilburg, The Netherlands